

Newbury College Corporation Curriculum & Quality Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 8th June 2020, 4.00 PM via Teams

Present	Name	Role
Membership	Sue Wood (SW)	External Member – Chair
	John Knight (JK)	External Member
	Matt Grimston (MG)	Student Governor
	Simon Thompson (ST)	External Member
	Sally Osmond (SO)	External Member (Alternate)
In Attendance	Lee Hunt (LH)	Vice Principal
	Jo Houghton (JoH)	Director of Business & Partnerships
	Jackie Heggs (JHe)	Teaching and Quality Manager
	Gill Parkinson (GP)	Clerk to the Corporation
	Jayne Steele (JS)	Director of Finance
	Iain Wolloff (IW)	Principal
Quorum:	Three members required	Meeting quorate, 5 members present

Item No.		Action
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>There were apologies from Derek Peaple who would be officially be appointed as a Corporation member at the next Corporation meeting on 13th July. It was noted that Geoff Knappett had resigned since the last meeting.</p> <p>The Committee and SMT approved the recording of the meeting on Microsoft Teams. This recording would be deleted once the minutes were written.</p>	GP
2.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS</p> <p>Members confirmed that they had no declarations of interest to make.</p>	
3.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>The Committee approved the Minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2020 and these would be signed by the Chair and sent to GP.</p>	SW
4.	<p>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES</p> <p>Item 6.1.1 - After discussion it had been agreed that the College SAR and HE SER should be considered at the same time of the year to improve efficiency. IW noted this would be planned for in the Autumn term (2020). GP to add to business plan.</p>	IW/GP

	<p>There would be a big change in self-assessment as the second half of the year was in lockdown so some outcome data would not be available. SW agreed that the response to the pandemic and lessons learned regarding online learning should be considered as part of this exercise.</p> <p>Item 6.1.2 HE monitoring report (Pearson) – all issues had been resolved and the report submitted.</p> <p>Item 6.1 – Teaching, Learning and Assessment Lesson observations – clarification was sought on how blended and on-line learning would be observed and recorded. JHe confirmed that a process for this was being developed. IW noted the student survey would include online learning and assessment of quality.</p>	
5.	CURRICULUM	
5.1	<p>Curriculum Development & Portfolio of Courses The Committee considered a report on current and planned developments in the curriculum offer and the planned Portfolio of Courses to be offered in 2020/21.</p> <p>The Plan for the current year was designed to rebuild the College’s reputation and prepare for the implementation of the UCN and the design of T levels. The report provided an overview of how the offer for 2019-20 would develop in the year ahead.</p> <p>The focus was on the development of key courses in Construction, Foundation Learning, Digital and UCN, supporting the ‘3,5,7’ approach by creating clear progression opportunities for learners moving from one level to another. Key areas highlighted were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing a return to work plan in line with government guidance. • Implementing an effective and efficient delivery plan in line with the Covid-19 guidelines. • Implementing a modern and focussed study programme model within Foundation Learning allowing for the development of independence and employability skills, including supported Internships and Apprenticeships and the development of an adapted funding model. • Expansion of the Achieve Programme. • Implementation of Six Form +. • Implementation of the UCN offer. • Implementation of lower level Child Care and Health & Social Care courses, linked to the 3,5,7 approach and local labour market intelligence. • Development of Plumbing and further design work related to Gas • Development of Electrical Installation further and a marketing push when the Workshop is formally opened. • Development of a Level 3 Degree Academy. • Development of the T level offer (when confirmed as a Wave 3 provider). • Development of the T Level Transition Pathway (ditto). • Development of the Pre-Access and Access offer creating a 3,5,7 approach for 19+ learners and effective use of the AEB. • Development of Digital Strategy – including a blended learning approach. • Development of Maths & English (M&E) Strategy. • Development of Employer Engagement Strategy linked to Progression and Academic support and Careers Advice linked to EEP hours within the Study Programme delivery. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing an effective Tutorial and Enrichment Programme linked to available hours within the Study Programme delivery. <p>LH explained that the L3 degree academy would help to bridge the gap between L3 and 4 courses and introducing the UCN culture to Year 2s of the L3 programme. IW explained this was similar to the service offered by Sixth Form Colleges.</p> <p>The UCN would move towards offering apprenticeships and full-time courses (co-teaching). The sponsoring Universities would be Bucks New (Engineering and Reading University (Child Development)). Discussions were also being held with another University.</p> <p>JK and JoH agreed that the needs of the employer were paramount when collaborating with Universities and it was important for the College to have input into the curriculum and qualification.</p> <p>LH explained that Sixth form plus related to the Access Programme and the College was working with St Barts who would provide Maths & English teaching - inspection and responsibility would be through the College. IW agreed that the initiative was excellent and assisted in the problem of providing assurance to parents and students that the College could provide a service to the level of Sixth Form as St Barts had a high reputation. Other secondary schools' heads could follow.</p> <p>JK asked for tenses to be consistent in the report in terms of timescales – IW noted all areas were underway.</p>	
5.2	<p>Student Applications</p> <p>Based on the current application intelligence it was predicted that the total enrolments for 16-19 learners for 20/21 would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16-19 Mainstream - 479 (including 55 EHC(P) Students) • 16-25 (fall into the 16-19 classification) Foundation Learning - 86 • 16-19 Total Learners - 565 <p>SW noted the difficulties inherent in predicting student numbers in terms of the pandemic. IW thought there were potentially more new entrants, but processes were delayed. Year 11s were not a priority to be supported by schools at present which could mean that lower level students were not as well motivated and prepared as in previous years. The virtual Open week was starting.</p> <p>Applications for the UCN were around 83 for apprenticeships, mostly on higher programmes, not including several big employers who were yet to make decisions. JoH noted media coverage suggested a big drop, but her team had contacted employers and all, but one was still expecting apprentice numbers to grow albeit later in the year. Many training providers were in a weaker position and the ESFA had terminated some contracts. IW noted that Colleges that NC employers were mainly large companies so were likely to be more resilient.</p> <p>IW agreed with SO that Colleges could be at the centre of the pandemic recovery including retooling and adult retraining.</p>	
6.	QUALITY	

<p>6.1.</p>	<p>Pandemic Response – Student Assessment</p> <p>The College moved to remote learning from 23rd March, remaining open only for vulnerable learners and the children of key workers. Ofqual announced that there would not be any exams in summer 2020 and that they were consulting on approaches to assess qualification outcomes in the “Extraordinary regulatory framework”. They agreed the following approaches by qualification type:</p> <p><u>GCSE, A Level and general qualifications:</u> Centre calculated outcomes and rank ordering of students. JHe noted this process was underway.</p> <p><u>Vocational Qualifications by purpose:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting progression: actual outcomes achieved by March 20th and calculated outcomes for units planned for completion between March 20th and July 31st. • Demonstrating occupational competence: Adapted or delayed assessment. • Both supporting progression and occupational competency: Awarding body to determine the main bias of the qualification and apply the relevant assessment. The first tranche had been submitted and most rankings completed. <p>MG asked what happened if information was not available. JHe noted that the College was working very closely with awarding bodies to ensure adaptations were made correctly. IW added that some awarding bodies had left it late to decide how assessment would be made. A small number of qualifications had a delayed outcome and so students would be working on this from September through to the new year.</p> <p>Each course leader would write a report to substantiate grades, any actions to change outcomes and any areas where it was impossible to make predictions (e.g. students not attending the exam).</p> <p>Most Foundation/entry level qualifications would not have any changes to assessment. Higher National Diplomas were initially expected to continue to be taught remotely and assessed using current practice, but this had been updated to allow calculation of Units completed after March 20th.</p> <p>There were no further questions.</p>	
<p>6.2</p>	<p>Quality Improvement Plan – Update on actions 45.35</p> <p>Progress against the key actions identified in the QIP was outlined in the distributed report. Covid-19 lockdown and Ofqual exceptional assessment arrangements had impacted on some actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance had been remote. • Assessment had been changed by Ofqual to models that require calculated outcomes, adapted assessments or delayed assessments which may reduce opportunities to achieve higher grades. • Many work placements were unable to continue as employers moved to remote working. There was questioning on this from the Governors - most placements had not been completed across the curriculum. The childcare awarding body had allowed an adaptation so students could complete their hours. • Workplace assessments may not be possible where apprentices had been furloughed. • The pre-16 schools programme was put on hold as schools provided remote learning. 	

	Nevertheless, some quality improvements had been made or sustained - there were no further questions.	
6.3	<p>Quality Data - in-year</p> <p>A report had been provided detailing retention and predicted achievement, pre-March 2020 College building closure and levels of participation in online learning, since the building closure.</p> <p>Both measures indicated positive progress and suggested improvements in quality, when compared to the previous year.</p> <p>SW congratulated the staff on their work and noted the College had good teamwork and had risen to the challenge. IW agreed on this and noted that before the pandemic figures were good and were a credit to most students. The introduction of Progression Coach Leader and Progression and Academic Support Coaches (PASCs) to support Curriculum Managers and Course Leaders concentrating on out of class support for academically challenged students had been a welcome development.</p>	
7.	LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT	
7.1	<p>Educational Character & Mission</p> <p>Following the Government announcement on the 10th May, the College was now planning for two distinct phases during the pandemic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June/July 2020 – when the government’s scientific advice confirm safety, certain groups of students would be invited to attend the College to undertake key tasks. The most recent guidance (14th May) confirmed that FE colleges may develop their own plans for any face-to-face contact prior to the Summer, based on NC’s key priorities. • 2020/21 Academic Year – the pandemic was likely to affect educational delivery significantly for the next 12 to 18 months. Therefore, in common with many other colleges a blended learning approach for students was planned from September. This would involve some College attendance, alongside online learning. Periods of attendance at the College were likely to continue to be subject to strict approaches to social distancing. <p>IW noted that Colleges could have a core role in the post pandemic recovery with a joined-up education system reducing private training providers and using Colleges as an anchor and bridge collaborating with schools and Universities (e.g. sixth form plus and UTC). Colleges had historically been encouraged to be competitive not collaborative so this could be a big culture change and strategy was important. The Govt planned to publish a specific skills/FE White Paper in Autumn prior to a HE paper.</p> <p>SW asked whether we would consider links with struggling Universities in the area.</p> <p>IW noted that Colleges should be cautious as changes could affect Colleges adversely.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the developments in on-line and blended learning. IW explained that historically Colleges had been trying to increase this anyway. Quality and differentiation were important and attendance at College could attract a premium. JK stated that learning technology was particularly important, and IW agreed that investment in digital strategy, technical ability and training would increase in priority although currently there was a lack of cash to invest in this.</p>	

	<p>JHe stated her team had been working on different approaches to blended learning for some time but there had been a slight reluctance on the part of teachers to take this up. JoH noted the College had had assistance from jisc for a learning technologist to help build a digital strategy.</p> <p>ST believed that students would be less willing to pay the same amount for blended learning so face to face still needed to be the central part of the offer. JK accentuated that this way of working could involve more personal engagement and students feeling vfm was higher than traditional ways of working.</p> <p>SW asked whether the College could provide safe areas for students coming in. IW noted this had been happening anyway for vulnerable learners and would include teachers teaching from the College.</p> <p>MG agreed that blended learning needed to be like being in the classroom and there was no substitute for two-way dialogue with a teacher. SW added that chatrooms blogs, YouTube etc. social media would improve the experience. JOH noted that current technology gave a virtual classroom experience.</p>	
8.	WELLBEING	
8.1	<p>Services for students</p> <p>The Committee considered a report on student support services, including tutorials, welfare, work experience & IAG</p> <p>The evolution of student support in relationship with the curriculum plan was ongoing and there had been much success in this area. The delivery of Enrichment and Tutorials is an area of weakness for the college that would be addressed in 20/21.</p> <p>There was a staffing resource need for this, and the business plan was being written in line with the review and reflection work undertaken. Employer Engagement was an area of strength and had been pushed forward in preparation for meeting the requirements of becoming a T Level provider. The college was in a strong position now and ready for this new curriculum if selected for wave 3. The welfare and support of learners had been judged to be outstanding by external agencies and this was endorsed by the Student Council and Governors feedback.</p> <p>LH explained that the tutorial system and enrichment were currently an area of weakness. Tutorials for adult learners and HE were currently being developed. Staffing would be resourced from under-utilised staff apart from HE where new resource would be needed eventually.</p> <p>There were no questions from the Committee.</p>	
9.	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JK asked the SMT to ensure recommendations were focused so the Committee were clear on their responsibility. • SW highlighted the need to watch Govt announcements carefully for opportunities which could be seized by the College. • JS noted finances could restrict actions as lower income was forecast in the near future, although the financial position was better than initially predicted at the start of the pandemic. Bot eroding pricing was key as overheads would 	

	<p>remain. Smaller class sizes and individual attention were key selling points. Lettings and commercial income were impacted by Covid and social distancing.</p> <p>SW thanked all the staff and IW noted that the debate had been of extremely high quality and he thanked them.</p>	
10.	<p>EVALUATION OF MEETING</p> <p>SO completed the meeting evaluation.</p>	

Confirmed as a correct record:

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Signature of Committee Chair

Date